

**INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE AND WAREHOUSE UNION
PACIFIC COAST PENSIONER ASSOCIATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
LABOR ARCHIVES OF WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON LIBRARIES SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
WALTER SMITH OF ILWU LOCAL 200, PCPA**

INTERVIEWEE: WALTER “PEE WEE” SMITH

INTERVIEWERS: HARVEY SCHWARTZ

SUBJECTS: ALASKA LONGSHORE DIVISION, LOGGING, ALASKA, LONGSHORE PENSION, LOCAL 200

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[00:00:00] **HARVEY SCHWARTZ:** Pee Wee, where were you born and when were you born?

[00:00:32] **WALTER SMITH:** I was born in Tacoma, Washington in 1942.

[00:00:36] **HARVEY:** You were? Okay. What countries did your parents come from?

[00:00:41] **WALTER:** They came from the United States.

[00:00:43] **HARVEY:** Okay. Do you know what their background was in Europe, or wherever?

[00:00:47] **WALTER:** Never researched our history, no.

[00:00:50] **HARVEY:** Okay. What’s it like growing up in Tacoma? Being a kid there?

[00:00:55] **WALTER:** I actually went to grade school in Eatonville, Washington, up by Mount Rainier. And then we moved to Alaska in 1956.

[00:01:06] **HARVEY:** What was your dad—what kind of work was your dad doing?

[00:01:08] **WALTER:** He was a logger.

[00:01:09] **HARVEY:** He was a logger?

[00:01:10] **WALTER:** Yes.

[00:01:13] **HARVEY:** Okay. So you're still a youngster in '56?

[00:01:19] **WALTER:** I was 14 when we moved to Alaska.

[00:01:21] **HARVEY:** Yes, right. What was that like?

[00:01:24] **WALTER:** It was really interesting. When you move to Alaska at 14, you're allowed to go out on commercial fishing boats, provided that the skipper would take responsibility for you. So I met a friend up there, one of the first guys I met in Ketchikan [Alaska] , whose uncle owned a seine boat [fishing boat] . And so, he took me on as a crew member and I got to out to go seining there at 14. We fished all through southeast Alaska during the summers.

[00:01:52] **HARVEY:** Did you seine mostly in the summer time?

[00:01:55] **WALTER:** Yes. They would allow us not—we didn't have to start school until October because of the fall fishing. Once fall fishing was over we had to go ahead and go to school.

[00:02:07] **HARVEY:** Do you guys have union when you're fishing?

[00:02:10] **WALTER:** A fisher union?

[00:02:11] **HARVEY:** Yes.

[00:02:11] **WALTER:** No. There were no unions. The longshore [union] was there in town where I was at in Ketchikan, yes.

[00:02:20] **HARVEY:** Can you describe just a little bit about that kind of work?

[00:02:23] **WALTER:** The fishing?

[00:02:24] **HARVEY:** Yes.

[00:02:25] **WALTER:** Well, when I first started, they didn't have these things what they call the power blocks, where the nets come in over the top of the mask in deck, you pull these over the back of the boat by hand. And so, it was pretty hard work.

For an example, you could make maybe six sets a day, which is where you run your net out and bring person back in and put your fish on board. You could do about six of those a day with the old style. When they brought in the power blocks you could do 18!

[00:02:54] **HARVEY:** Yes.

[00:02:54] **WALTER:** So it's an entirely different world.

[00:02:57] **HARVEY:** What kind of fish were these?

[00:02:58] **WALTER:** We're using salmon.

[00:02:59] **HARVEY:** There were salmon fishermen, okay.

[00:03:01] **WALTER:** Yes. All salmon. It was Cohos, Kings, Humpys, Sockeye.

[00:03:09] **HARVEY:** You graduate from high school in Ketchikan?

[00:03:11] **WALTER:** No, actually I moved to Sitka [Alaska] . I went to two years in high school in Ketchikan and I finished off in Sitka. I lived in Sitka during when we [Alaska] became a state.

[00:03:25] **HARVEY:** Yes, okay. 1959.

[00:03:27] **WALTER:** Yes.

[00:03:28] **HARVEY:** Okay. What'd you do after high school?

[00:03:35] **WALTER:** Well then right after high school, I went logging for a little time. And then I did a little longshore up in Sitka when they built the mill about that time up there in '61. And I worked longshore in there for a bit. Then in '64 I got drafted into the army.

[00:03:56] **HARVEY:** What's that work like you were doing before you got drafted in the army? Can you describe the logging work a little bit?

[00:04:01] **WALTER:** The logging? Yes. I did virtually everything. I was chaser, choker setter, a whistle punk, everything out in the rigging.

[00:04:10] **HARVEY:** You were everything, weren't you? Can you describe what the work is like a little bit? Like an example.

[00:04:17] **WALTER:** When you're logging, in those days, you didn't have these towers that they just punch buttons and it goes up in the air and you string them out. You had to raise your own trees, you had to run guidelines off those trees to hold the tree up. Then you're run lines out, 1200 or 1300 yards or so, up into the woods and what they call a "main line" and a "hallback." Then you would set the chokers around—you'd use two chokers, and you set those around the logs and you drag those down to the tree. Then, from the tree there, they would have log trucks come in and they put them on the log trucks and take them to the—wherever they're going to store them, usually in the water.

[00:05:02] **HARVEY:** How about longshore itself? Getting the log ready for vessel?

[00:05:07] **WALTER:** Well, when we first started longshore it was all hand work. It was hand stow on the pulp industry and the logs were ground log and on the different ships and then we also had lumber. And the lumber was basically a hand stow operation when we started. And, it was hard work.

[00:05:29] **HARVEY:** I presume it was! You went into the army in '64?

[00:05:33] **WALTER:** Yes.

[00:05:37] **HARVEY:** What'd you do in the army?

[00:05:40] **WALTER:** Well I had several different jobs. I was one of the last people through Fort Ord [California] . They had the spinal meningitis outbreak down there. I was cadre at the time. Matter of fact, I finished basic training and they sent me to the NCO [Non-commissioned Officer] Academy. I got out of there and then I was a sergeant in one of these little outfits to train personnel. When they shut the port down they didn't have anything to do with us, so I ended up over at the place called Presidio [of] Monterey in Monterey, California, West Coast Defense Language Institute as a supervisor and inspector to post-engineers. And then [President Lyndon] Johnson come up with that 80,000 pushover to Vietnam and they were just like trying to find a spot for two years and I got nailed to go over there for nine months. My last nine months in the service.

[00:06:30] **HARVEY:** In Vietnam?

[00:06:30] **WALTER:** Uh-huh.

[00:06:32] **HARVEY:** Can you describe what that was like? I mean, that may fill a book—

[00:06:36] **WALTER:** I was a recovery and evacuation specialist. I took mainly deceased personnel from the battlefield down to Saigon [now Ho Cho Minh City, Vietnam] to Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base. And then I would stay down there until they were all logged in and everything and then I'd fly back up to the operations. I was in the central highlands, a place called An Ke.

[00:07:00] **HARVEY:** When did you get out of the army?

[00:07:04] **WALTER:** 'Sixty-six. Two-year draft.

[00:07:05] **HARVEY:** So you missed the Tet Offensive . You got out of there before that.

[00:07:09] **WALTER:** Yes.

[00:07:12] **HARVEY:** Right.

[00:07:13] **WALTER:** This was that first push, and we were actually an advanced party of the first [?cab?] when over there.

[00:07:20] **HARVEY:** I was in Fort Ord in '63 for basic.

[00:07:25] **WALTER:** Were you?

[00:07:26] **HARVEY:** Yes.

[00:07:26] **WALTER:** You beat me by a year.

[00:07:28] **HARVEY:** It was close. Anyway, so then, you get out in '66 and what do you do after that?

[00:07:34] **WALTER:** I went back longshore. Logged a little bit. I came in from logging and some guys asked me to come back to longshore. And got to Ketchikan and went back to longshore.

[00:07:47] **HARVEY:** How did things change in longshore over time in your experience?

[00:07:50] **WALTER:** Well, what we did—when I started out there, like I said there was only hand-stow work on the pulp jobs. You have these 150 pound bales of pulp and you would literally truck them into the wings and flop them over and stow them from the bottom up. During the course of years the boss came in later on and that the multi-lift, no real hand-stowing going on. Just to set the loads in place and hook them and get out of the way. Other than that. . . Then the log ships you know that was still pretty hard work and you had to dump the logs into the hold there and make sure they hold right and stow them properly. And then on the lumber ships, we used to have to have lots in different lengths of lumber you had them from a ten-foot lumber to a twenty-six footer and you had to figure out the stow on them as you're coming out and compared a lot they had in order to get everything to fit in tight. So it was a lot of fun.

[00:09:00] **HARVEY:** It sounds like it.

[00:09:02] **WALTER:** Well, it was kind of like putting a Rubik's Cube [puzzle game] together. So that became fun.

[00:09:08] **HARVEY:** You kind of learn how to—get a feel on how to deal with that, make the job a little easier, a little quicker?

[00:09:16] **WALTER:** It worked good for me. The people that I learned under were actually just ordering load one or two loads at a time. Because they obviously didn't want to sit there and do the math. The lot numbers came in sixties. So I could load 60 loads in 15 minutes on a piece of paper. I just hand a piece of paper to the driver down there and the piece of paper to the men in the hold and say, "Do it this way," and I'd just get out of the way and let it get done. It wasn't that complicated.

[00:09:49] **HARVEY:** What local was this? Was this Local 200?

[00:09:52] **WALTER:** No, this was back when all the little individual locals were in Alaska, they were all their own. We were all called Local 62.

[00:09:59] **HARVEY:** You were Local 62?

[00:10:02] **WALTER:** And then we had—we brought in Metlakatla [Alaska] , which is a Native reservation alongside us and made them 62A. Then we went over to Prince of Wales to the Native corporations. There that was Hydaburg [Alaska] , Craig [Alaska] , and Klawock [Alaska] , and made them 62B. So they all came under the banner "62." And then on up the lines. [waves hand to indicate whole Alaskan coast] The oldest one in Alaska is Local 19, which is Juneau. That was the first one and they had—was it 16? I can't remember.

[00:10:38] **HARVEY:** Well, Local 19 is—

[00:10:40] **WALTER:** 16, excuse me.

[00:10:41] **HARVEY:** Because 19 is Seattle.

[00:10:41] **WALTER:** Yes.

[00:10:45] **HARVEY:** Okay. Were you guys active in the '71 strike? Did you guys go on strike at that time?

[00:10:52] **WALTER:** No. We had a provision in Alaska because we had to have the food and supplies and stuff coming up there and there was no way you could support something like that without, you know, starving everybody in the communities. Everything that comes in and out of southeast Alaska [is] either by plane or by barge. There's no roads.

[00:11:14] **HARVEY:** So you guys didn't experience the '71 Strike?

[00:11:17] **WALTER:** No.

[00:11:18] **HARVEY:** Okay. You know, Ron Magdon knows a lot about the Northwest and he mentioned that in the Northwest, distance is a problem. Things are widely scattered.

[00:11:34] **WALTER:** Yes.

[00:11:36] **HARVEY:** You know, can you kind of speak to that as an issue?

[00:11:38] **WALTER:** Well, yes. I'll give you an example of the next port towards me other than the Metlakatla that we made 62A, was Wrangell [Alaska] . It had two saw mills. By air it's about 90 miles, no roads and if you had to either fly there or take a tug or boat or—we have a ferry system through there now. And then the next port up from that is another, oh, probably 40 miles, and that would be Petersburg [Alaska] , which is a Norwegian fishing village, right now. But we used to do all the Foss Alaska Line [now Alaska Marine Lines] barge work through there, the containers. And then the next port up after that you have to go back to the other side of Baranof Island, which is another 100, probably a 180 miles from Petersburg to Sitka, which is right out on the coast. So you have to go through a bit narrow inlet called Pearl Strait [also called Háat Ishkáak] to get out around to that one. And when you get done with that port, you got to go out 180-some miles again to head on up to Juneau.

[00:12:49] **HARVEY:** Does this distance cause problems for you guys? Political problems in the sense of maintaining cohesion in the union?

[00:12:58] **WALTER:** Well, what we used to do up there before we started this Local 200 was we had the all-Alaska Counsel. Once a year, one person from each one of the little locals, would meet at a central location and go over what's being done in their particular ports and how to sit down and start negotiating contracts. And then, later on in the early seventies, G. Johnny Parks [then-ILWU officer] would come up. And we would just basically do a 'me too' at the coast. And that life was simple in those days because Johnny would come up and say 'Here's what they got, here's what they get here.' And basically it made life a lot easier.

[00:13:46] **HARVEY:** Yes. When does the amalgamation come about? To amalgamate everyone in Local 200? Is that in the eighties?

[00:13:56] **WALTER:** Yes, we started up in 1980. We start the front run of it and what happened is--we had two contracts up there. We had one contract but two different organizations that ILWU and the IBU [Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific] . The IBU ports at the time were Kodiak [Alaska] , the Nikiski [Alaska] , Homer [Alaska] , Valdez [Alaska] . [They] were all IBU.

Well, we wanted to put all the longshore in one group because it's the same work, so they came in and basically that was one of the reasons we wanted to start Local 200 because we were still doing the joint contract but we wanted to put everybody in one deal and just have one local. And then all the little locals would then become units, which served us quite well for a while. What happened—

[00:14:45] **HARVEY:** How did it serve well when it served well?

[00:14:50] **WALTER:** Well, because we had—a guy named Larry Carter was heading up there. And he did all the footwork and everything, did all the paperwork and so, all the people in the individual ports really didn't have to do what they used to do to keep things rocking and rolling. It would just be all one guy putting everything together. And it worked fine until—and then we decided to go ahead and make our local more like the International.

We started bringing other entities. Like for example, we brought in Bartlett Memorial Hospital [sic] , the hospital and then we brought in the policemen out of Dutch Harbor. So, when we went and diversified our local with that, then comes naturally a convention and election of officers. Well, it took the starch out of what the longshore really wanted because you couldn't get rid of the people that were in leadership there if majority of the people in the other entities decided that they wanted to keep them there. So, at that particular time, in the latter part of the nineties, we said we're just going to go ahead and go our different ways. We'll just have a longshore division in Alaska and drop out of the local—which is in our bylaws, you could drop out when you wanted to. That's basically about where things went.

[00:16:27] **HARVEY:** Now the longshore division, does it have a local number?

[00:16:32] **WALTER:** No.

[00:16:32] **HARVEY:** It has got no local number?

[00:16:33] **WALTER:** Nope. Just called the Alaska Longshore Division.

[00:16:37] **HARVEY:** And are they part of 200?

[00:16:40] **WALTER:** No.

[00:16:41] **HARVEY:** They're no longer part of 200?

[00:16:42] **WALTER:** No, there's only two units—we call them units still—in Local 200 and that's Ketchikan and Juneau. And they pay a fee to the division. The division is the owner of the contract. And so, in order for

them to participate in the contract they have to pay a fee to the contract but they're not part of the division, only in the form of the fees.

[00:17:10] **HARVEY:** The Alaska Longshoremen's Division doesn't have a number?

[00:17:16] **WALTER:** We don't have a number yet. And you know, we're working on that. I think eventually it will. But I don't know. In Alaska right now things have just went [downhill] because of the environmental movement in southeast where we lost all the logs and everything, it just kind of shut us down. The only thing that really keeps us going in Alaska right now is Dutch Harbor. I mean, Dutch Harbor is probably 65 or better percent of our work, of our hours. And we produced about 500,000 hours a year up there. And so, that's a lot of hours coming out of one port and that's basically on the fish and the container ships.

[00:18:00] **HARVEY:** And what is that? Food and equipment and stuff like that for the whole of Alaska or southern part of Alaska? What kind of products are coming in?

[00:18:10] **WALTER:** Into Alaska?

[00:18:11] **HARVEY:** Yes. No, I mean at Dutch Harbor.

[00:18:15] **WALTER:** Well they send out fish—fish meal and fish. We have a lot of trapper work, we've got trapper ships come in there. But the big ones is Alaska [Presner?] Lines and Horizon Lines with their big container ships. And that takes the bulk of the cargo.

[00:18:33] **HARVEY:** What about oil?

[00:18:35] **WALTER:** We're working right now on a—we used to do the replacement pipes out of Seward [Alaska] but that kind of went to the wayside right now. But, Shell Oil is starting to come down. We're trying to get hold of the operations that are going to come up in Dutch Harbor and come to Beaufort Sea and they're going to put in the Shell mines up there. So, that's still up in the air. One minute they're done and the next minute they're not.

[00:19:06] **HARVEY:** When did you retire?

[00:19:07] **WALTER:** Well, I got in a traffic accident down here in 1991, going to a visitor friend of mine who used to work with us up in Ketchikan, in Olympia [Washington]. Doctors refused to allow me back on the waterfront because of the nature of the work I did, my ankles were bad that they—almost cut a foot off, in fact it kind of wished they would've sometimes. But anyway long-story short there, he said, "We're just not going to release you to go back in the waterfront." But I had enough years, I still got my full retirement.

So then, I was going—let me give you another history on me—I was going through Cabela's [sporting goods store], I was on a field trip with my wife, and my sister, and brother-in-law. I was going through Cabela's down in Syndey, Nebraska [location of Cabela's headquarters]. And a guy got a call from a friend of mine in Seward that they were having a meeting up in Anchorage [Alaska] and what happened—I better back up a little bit here because I'm getting ahead of myself.

In 1998, the negotiations—because of the lost work we had down southeast, our health and welfare program went down. The only way we could get health and welfare was to go in with the IBU, which we allowed Dutch

Harbor to belong to the IBU when we organized them up there. They were giving the option of coming into our healthcare or going to the IBU healthcare, because of Kodiak. Kodiak was the closest port to them and they were old IBU. They were old ILWU but they maintained their benefits in IBU.

So anyway, long story short, they agreed to take our members up from southeast into their program, which is a premium buy-in program, but they said, "But we don't have room for your 156 of you retirees,"—who were down southeast. "However, we're not going to throw them out to the wolves, we're going to go ahead and give them an 80-20 program but they're not going to have dental and vision and all the other entities that the other program has, but we'll give them some sort of coverage."

So then, going back to my Sydney deal, I get a call from a guy out in Seward, he says, "Well, we're having to pre-negotiation caucus in Anchorage and I just noticed on the docket that you self-funded"—they call us the self-funded—they funded our program out of the reserves of the welfare trust in Portland. And they said, "We don't see you on the docket. You might want to make a trip." I used to be the—before we started Local 200, I was a southeast longshore leader, is what they call us. So I was familiar with the politics.

Anyway, so I dropped my sister and brother off in Missoula, Montana, run my motorhome and my wife down to Orofino. Dropped her off in Orofino, Idaho and had her drive me in Lewiston [Idaho]. Then I flew up to Anchorage and got up there involved in that pre-negotiation caucus and Big Bob and Spinner [former-ILWU officer James Spinosa] and those guys were up there and I had the guy who took over my job, the southeast leader, a guy named Gary Leask, out in Ketchikan, get up to the mike and make a motion to somebody from a self-funded retiree set up in negotiations.

So, that's basic story. So anyway, that's when we started going. Big Bob came up on the next negotiation and they did merge us into their program. He came up there and negotiated a 50 cent increase—or a dedicated account for our particular self-funded retirees, not to pay for the benefits, the 80-20 that we were already getting but to improve upon those. I don't know how that got by the employers because to this day they're walking the walls going, "We did what? Excuse me?"

Because that generates—because you're looking at 500,000 hours, for example this year. That's a quarter of a million dollars going into a fund. Plus, I have a half of million sitting in that fund now and this fund can only be used for us. And now because of attrition, we're down to only thirty-six members with seventy-seven participants counting the spouses. We have a lot of money sitting there.

So, that's the bulk of that. And I'm going to go up there first—by the way, since then I've been sitting up there every negotiation. They pay me to—they don't pay me, they pay everything, all my expenses to sit in on behalf of the self-funded retirees.

[00:24:01] **HARVEY:** Now is this, this is basically every three years that the contract comes up?

[00:24:06] **WALTER:** Our last one was—oh, gosh, when was our last one? I think it was a three-year contract last time. They vary. That's part of negotiations. Sometimes we'll go on a two year one. We did [a contract] for five. That changes every—we'll want one thing, the employer will want another. And we come to an agreement. So this is the one we're good through 'til 2015. But we start pre-negotiations now and then we're ready to start going at probably around April next year.

[00:24:41] **HARVEY:** Okay. You mentioned your contract, the G. Johnny Parks Period, your contract followed the contract of the coastwide contract?

[00:24:54] **WALTER:** Plus the differential. We went for a 35 percent deferential cost of wage because of the cost living out there.

[00:25:03] **HARVEY:** Okay. Oh, so your contract will follow the. . .

WALTER; Got out of that when we went into the Local 200, we got away from following the coast. We negotiated first, which we always thought was a mistake, but we couldn't convince the leadership that it wasn't a very wise thing to do. Now we're getting a little smarter.

So now, it follows coastwide contract?

[00:25:29] **WALTER:** Yes, I believe you guys are now—the coast participation up. And ours won't start until next June.

[00:25:36] **HARVEY:** So it starts next June?

[00:25:37] **WALTER:** Well, that will be the start of the contract, the next contract.

[00:25:42] **HARVEY:** Very interesting. What have you done in retirement since 1991, besides being involved in the caucus? Excuse me, in negotiations of your contract?

[00:25:55] **WALTER:** What'd I do?

[00:25:56] **HARVEY:** What have you been doing since '91? What do you do with your time?

[00:26:02] **WALTER:** Mainly work on the house. [laughs] And I went out for several years, too. We'd go down to Yuma [Arizona] , stayed down there for three months out of the year in winter. We'd do Snowbird [Utah] , whatever they call it. We'd go down to Yuma and Casa Grande [Arizona] and Tucson [Arizona] . And that's about it.

[00:26:24] **HARVEY:** And how active have you been in the Pensions? I mean it's a long way from United States mainland as it were. I mean, the lower 48, I guess, is what I'm saying. But how active can you be in the Pensioners and how active—do you guys have active Pensioners up there?

[00:26:43] **WALTER:** Yes. And when I came to convention here, geez, I can't remember. It must of been four or five years ago here in Canada, I signed up 42 guys that I'd knew personally out of there, paid them for myself just to get a club going. And, Phil Lelli [from ILWU Local 23, Tacoma] is the one that introduced me to it. He asked me to come down to the one they had in Seattle and we got to go on that. And he's come up fishing.

[00:27:11] **HARVEY:** Oh he did?

[00:27:11] **WALTER:** Yes. Then, I got down here, I signed some people up and since then, because we're so spread out up there, you just can't have any timely meetings. You cannot do what the law requires you to do. You can't have one guy handling the money and stuff because there's no way to get reports out. I mean we're

spread out for thousands of miles. It's not like the Columbia River group or the Seattle group, or something where they can say "Yeah, let's all get together next week." You say that up there and say, "Well you better hire a couple of airplanes because you're going to be flying thousands of miles and finding people."

So, what we're going to do here and this is going to be discussed this upcoming meeting I'm coming in October first is we're thinking about setting up a fund to the division, for the Pensioners, and what we'll do—because you can't get information from the trust anymore on addresses. It's almost virtually impossible to find anybody because the laws. We're going to set something up through the trust, I believe, it will go ahead that will put everybody that's retired into this fund that'll be paid for by the division for retired members. And then we'll have our own little club. However, we'll probably still stay pretty large, which makes more sense to us because like I say, when you get down to having clubs and you have to do your LM-3 [Labor Organization Annual Report, required by federal government] or whatever you have to do, it gets very complicated.

[00:28:45] **HARVEY:** Can you do very much on computer, in staying in contact with guys?

[00:28:50] **WALTER:** You know, most of the people that I represent. . ."Computer, what?" They don't—"Where do you plug that in?" That's not—there's no way they're going to do it. And remember a lot of people that I'm representing are in nursing homes. And you know, they're old. I think our average age last time I looked was 83! So, no. It's basically, if we're going to do something like this we're going to have different levels but I think it'll work.

[00:29:27] **HARVEY:** And why are you so committed to the Pensioners Club?

[00:29:33] **WALTER:** Well, I'll tell you what, I've always enjoyed my—I have a fine group of people that I work with. My leadership up there right now they treat me like gold and with respect. And I've always enjoyed my—I've just had a wonderful career. You couldn't ask for anything better. I've always had good benefits, we made plenty of money, had the opportunity to travel around and meet people, go to different ports and it's just a great life.

It wouldn't be very fair on my part just to set it aside after I retire to say, "Hey, let's just don't do anything anymore."

[00:30:12] **HARVEY:** That's great.

[00:30:13] **WALTER:** So I just try to—and I'd like to bail out sometime here. But I'm trying to get other people involved in it but once again you know, it's a—you got to get somebody to step up there and swing the bat.

[00:30:26] **HARVEY:** Yes, exactly.

[00:30:28] **WALTER:** But anyway, that's about where it is.

[00:30:32] **HARVEY:** I appreciate your taking time out to do an interview. Much appreciated. Anything you'd like to add, have I left out anything major? Have we missed a major issue?

[00:30:42] **WALTER:** Well, there's one thing that's always been on the back of my mind. I've been to several meetings I felt like addressing and I just haven't quite got around to doing. And that's our leadership.

People especially within my family will come up to me and say, "How in the heck do you guys maintain what you get? You get healthcare after you retire. You even get bumps up during the years. How the devil? We don't get that stuff when we retire."

It's really simple. See, our generals aren't from West Point. Our generals aren't hand-me-down, heir-apparent bean counters from Harvard. Our generals will hit the bricks with us. Our generals don't sit back two hundred miles in a tent and say "Take that hill, hard." Our generals head up that hill and say, "Follow me." Our generals are one of us. That's what makes us different.

[00:31:38] **HARVEY:** Yes. You put Big Bob in that category?

[00:31:43] **WALTER:** Big time. He could have sainthood in our state.

[00:31:51] **HARVEY:** Much appreciated.

[00:31:52] **WALTER:** Not a problem.

[00:31:53] **HARVEY:** Cool, thank you. I think we're going to get you out in time.

[00:31:54] **WALTER:** I hope I helped you out.

[00:31:54] **HARVEY:** You helped me out a lot. I felt like we needed a representative from Alaska. Much appreciated.